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USE OF FINGER BOWLS.

AN OBJECTIONABLE CUSTOM AS SOMETIMES PRACTICED.

A Note by C. H. LAVINDER, Surgeon, United States Public Health Service.

A recent bulletin of the service (Public Health Bulletin No. 57) reviews the subjects of common drinking cups and roller towels, and gives the laws relating thereto. Neither in this bulletin nor elsewhere have I ever seen any reference to an abuse which it seems to me is of little less importance than the common drinking cup, and the dangers from which are of quite a similar character. This is the use of the common finger bowl.

It seems to be customary even in high-class restaurants to have in use about half a dozen finger bowls, more or less, and these do service for many patrons. The water in them seems to be changed at rare intervals and entirely in the discretion of the waiter. Occasionally one will see the old water poured out and fresh poured in, but far more frequently even this is not done. I presume the bowls must be taken out and washed occasionally. Now, when one considers that many persons in using these bowls wash not only their fingers but their lips as well, it would seem that the conditions of the common drinking cup are different only in degree. Moreover with the finger bowl it is not only the question of using a common bowl but often common water also.

Since I first noticed in some hotels and restaurants this disgusting manner of serving these convenient accessories of a table service, I have taken some pains to learn how widespread such a thing might be, and my observations lead me to the belief that it is very common indeed. I am inclined to think that the common finger bowl should be classed with the common drinking cup, as an offense of the same character, but possibly less in degree.

HOOKWORM DISEASE.

PROPORTION OF MALES TO FEMALES IN THE AMERICAN HOOKWORM (*NECATOR AMERICANUS*), BASED ON 13,080 WORMS FROM 102 CASES.¹

By CH. WARDELL STILES, Professor of Zoology, and W. I. ALTMAN, Assistant, Hygienic Laboratory, United States Public Health Service.

The point was raised by Leichtenstern in 1885 that by counting the male and female hookworms passed by a patient and drawing the proportion, the clinician has a practical clue to the completeness or incompleteness of the cure effected. This point was based upon the premises that the males and the females are present in relatively fairly constant proportion and that the males are more difficult to expel than are the females.

¹ Read at the XV International Congress on Hygiene and Demography, Washington, September, 1912.